She was well aware that even if the Duke invited her to stay in his London house, she could not do so after what the Marchioness had hinted to her. "What am I . . to do?" she asked herself. "What *am* I to . . do?"

There was no answer. She could only think how overwhelmingly grand the dining-room of the huge castle was. The superb silver ornaments on the table, the butler and footmen in attendance, bore no comparison to her own situation.

The Marchioness left first, driving away in a smart, closed carriage drawn by two grey horses. There were a coachman and a footman on the box. A lady's-maid sat inside facing the Marchioness with her back to the horses.

The Duke waved his Aunt goodbye, as his travelling carriage moved up to the front door. It was up to date and roomy and, at the same time, built for speed. It was drawn by four perfectly matched chestnuts, and Luella knew it would be very exciting to drive behind them.

There was plenty of room for Enrico who was looking thrilled at the sight of the horses. When Luella would have put him between her and the Duke he suggested Enrico should sit outside. He explained that he would see better and it was where he had always preferred to be when he was a boy. Luella thought it was kind of him to think of it.

As she sat down beside the Duke she felt a strange little tremor run through her because she was so close to him. He was looking magnificent in a whipcord riding coat, and with a tall hat slightly to one side of his head. He was undoubtedly the most handsome

man she had ever seen. She knew as they set off down the drive that this was something she would remember for the rest of her life.

The carriage was carrying them faster than she had ever gone before. It was not hampered by the luggage, which was following them in a brake. Also in the brake were the Duke's valet together with several other servants. Luella thought they must have come down from London with him and were now returning.

The chestnut team soon passed the Marchioness's carriage. They were out of sight of the brake almost before they left the village.

"Will you be going to see the Italian Ambassador?" Luella said to the Duke.

"I have already sent a groom to London asking him to call on me as soon as he possibly can," the Duke replied. Luella looked surprised and the Duke explained: "When my Aunt mentioned him, I thought I would be wise to consult him about my problem before I approach my solicitors."

He paused a moment and then went on: "Once it is in their hands, it may easily, however discreet they may be, be talked about by the wrong people." There was silence before he added: "As this is an Italian menace, it should be part of the Ambassador's responsibility to see that I am not blackmailed in this diabolical manner by one of his countrymen."

"That seems to be a good idea," Luella agreed.

"I thought you would think so," the Duke answered. "Therefore the quicker we can get to London, the better."